

## **Announcement of the 2006 CSP Watersheds**

### **Key Points**

**8/25/05**

- The Secretary's announcement on the selection of watersheds eligible for the 2006 Conservation Security Program (CSP) is another significant milestone in implementation of this important new program.
- On July 25th, the Secretary announced the selection of nearly 12,700 CSP program participants from the FY-2005 sign-up across the nation.
- Those 2005 contract offers translate into more than a \$1 billion long-term commitment to conservation over the next ten years.
- In 2004, we offered the CSP in 18 watersheds in 22 states. In 2005, we went nationwide including Puerto Rico. The two-year program has rewarded nearly 14,800 stewards on 10.9 million acres of working lands in 220 watersheds.
- In 2006, we will add additional conservation leaders and stewards of our precious resources to the initial nationwide class of CSP plan holders and our original CSP pioneers.
- In FY-2006, The Conservation Security Program will touch:
  - ♦ 110 additional watersheds
  - ♦ One or more additional watershed in each state and Puerto Rico
  - ♦ Guam will be added to the CSP ranks, giving us additional insight into stewardship in the tropics.
- One of the promises of CSP is to provide farmers and ranchers with assistance and resource enhancements that are fitting for their operation – regardless of whether they are located on the flat lands of Illinois and Iowa, the rolling hills of West Virginia, or the glacial valleys of Montana.
- We have worked hard to design a program that provides the right assistance, the right technology, and the right incentives to motivate producers to provide even more conservation.
- And we continue to make significant programmatic improvements to streamline processes for application and payment to decrease the cost of delivering CSP.
- The wisdom of the Administration's watershed approach is exemplified with the recent Congressional (Senate) action to change the budgetary scope of CSP once again. The watershed approach allows the program to appropriately match the amount of funds provided by Congress.
- The CSP is a tremendously important program for America's working agricultural lands—lands that provide much of the world's food and fiber and lands that are home to many families.

- No other program recognizes and rewards farmers for ongoing high levels of environmental stewardship. CSP helps producers maintain and further their conservation commitment and provides a strong incentive for others to follow their example.
- For 2006, we are selecting 110 watersheds from across the Nation. About 50 percent of the farmland is cropland and about 50 percent is grazing land.
- This level of participation keeps the program within the Congressional budget sideboards.
- Other watersheds will be selected as funding becomes available, until landowners in every watershed have had a chance to participate.
- Every agricultural operation is in a watershed!
- The watersheds were selected based on prioritized lists submitted by State Conservationists and Basin Directors and the State Technical Committees and trimmed to stay within the current budget projections.
- We are announcing these watersheds now because we want producers to have as much time as possible to learn about CSP and to get ready for the sign-up.
- There will be an announcement about the timing and extent of the sign-up sometime during the Fall.